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AIR

SGAV-8449

Panel 9/c at on 28 feb 55

FEB 23 1955

ATTN

Chief, SE

Albania
ODACID-Greek Correspondence on Epirus Claim

REFERENCE: SGAA-12868, 29 November 1954

Upon receipt of reference, ODACID was queried on the subject of the reported exchange of letters between ODACID and the Greek Ambassador in Washington. Forwarded under separate cover is the reply received from ODACID, which summarizes memoranda exchanged in May and June 1953 and states, for the information of KUBARK only, U. S. policy with respect to Albania's boundaries.

SE/1-bk
15 February 1955

Distribution:

- 3 - [] (w/l encl. as stated under sc)
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ATTACHMENT TO SGAW-8449
Under Separate Cover

January 10, 1955

SUBJECT: Exchange of Communications between Department and Greek Embassy Relative to Greek Position on Northern Epirus

With reference to your memorandum of December 14 there is set forth below information available to the Department which, it is believed, will clarify the questions arising from a recent statement by a Greek Foreign Office official to the effect that there had been an exchange of letters between the Department and the Greek Embassy of Washington, which gave the Greek Government definite grounds for expecting US support for the Greek position on Northern Epirus (Southern Albania).

Apparently, the episode to which the Greek official made reference was an exchange of memoranda in this regard, initiated on May 27, 1953 by the Greek Ambassador at Washington, Athanase G. Politis. At his request, Mr. Politis called on that date at the Department personally to deliver a memorandum dated May 25, 1953, which he said was intended by his Government officially to record its views on the subject so that they might be considered in connection with any possible talks between the big powers concerning the future of Albania. The memorandum itself states that in addition to the purposes of transmitting, for the information of the US Government, a formal statement on the subject by the Greek Government and of setting forth certain reservations in regard to a future democratic government of Albania, it was intended for such use by the American Government as it might deem appropriate to make in conversations with the exiled Albanian political organizations and personalities.

The Greek position on Albania as contained in the memorandum is that:

1. Albania should be an independent and democratic state maintaining friendly relations with its neighbors.
2. Not just any democratic government of Albania to succeed the present regime should be considered friendly nor would the state of war, which technically still exists between Greece and Albania, be automatically terminated in the absence of a concrete demonstration by such an Albanian Government of peaceful and friendly intentions toward Greece.
3. A demonstration of such intentions would include a readiness on the part of such an Albanian Government to recognize all international obligations assumed by Albania up to 1940 as regards "the Greek Minority of Northern Epirus," to repudiate unreservedly the persecution of this minority by the communist regime, and to permit "the repatriation of those members of this minority...who would be willing to return to their homes."

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ATTACHMENT TO SCAW-8449
Urgent Separate Cover

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4. On the other hand, the Greek Government reaffirms its resolve "to avoid the use of force in the settlement of the question of Northern Epirus and to seek its solution in due time through legal international channels, or even only through negotiations with the Government of a free and independent Albania." (The words of Prime Minister Papagos before the Greek Parliament on December 17, 1952 which the memorandum also quotes are: "repudiates the use of force and relies solely on lawful international methods for a settlement of the North Epirot issue").

In his oral exposition of the Greek position when presenting the memorandum, Ambassador Politis remarked that Greece does not relinquish its demands for territorial adjustment in Northern Epirus. The memorandum itself contained no reference specifically to "territorial" claims.

Under date of June 5, 1953 the Department responded to the Greek demarche in a memorandum which expressed its pleasure that the Greek Government considers it necessary and compatible with Greek interests that Albania should be a free and independent state. This was observed to be consistent with the view of the US Government "which seeks the establishment of a free and independent Albania in which no neighboring country shall exert a predominant influence." The Department also noted with gratification the reaffirmation by the Greek Government "of its resolve to avoid the use of force in the settlement of the question of Northern Epirus and to seek solution of this question in due time through legal international channels or even through bilateral negotiations with the Government of a free and independent Albania." Our memorandum concluded by assuring the Greeks that the US Government will continue to seek the views of the Greek Government "in future discussions concerning Albania in which questions concerning Greek national interests may arise."

It should be noted that no mention was made by the Department to the question of Greek territorial claims nor was any comment made by it which touched on the merits of the Greek demands concerning Northern Epirus, the requisite nature of a future Albanian Government, etc. Consequently, "US support for the Greek position," as exemplified by this exchange, can be deduced only with respect to the expression of our satisfaction over (1) the Greek Government's affirmation of the desirability of a free and independent Albania, and (2) its repudiation of the use of force in settling the Northern Epirot question, whose solution it resolves to seek in due time through legal international channels or through bilateral negotiations.

Extensive scrutiny has been devoted in the Department to the subject of the Greek claims on Albania, particularly by the Territorial Studies group which concentrated on such matters during the war. The conclusion of these efforts within the Department was to take a very dim view of the Greek

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or Separate Cover

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position in this regard. An impression of our view was effectively conveyed to the Greek delegation at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946 in discouraging their efforts to obtain recognition of the Greek claims. Publicly, we have avoided taking a stand on the substance of the Greek claims and have implicitly committed ourselves only to recognizing a right of the Greeks to attempt to resolve the issues by "lawful international methods". It is this situation, however, as you know, which poses for us continuing difficulties in propaganda vis-a-vis the present Albanian regime and in our relations with the Albanian political exiles. But, for your information only, it is a formally accepted element of US policy that, for the sake of Balkan peace and stability, we favor the retention of Albania's prewar boundary and oppose any measures which would violate that boundary.

In light of the above facts, the reported statement of the Greek official is, in scope, a misrepresentation both of our response to the Greek demarche May 1953 and of general US policy as regards the Greek position on Northern Epirus.

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